

Friendzone

EXT. CATERING HALL - NIGHT

Music goes from loud to soft as JARED, late 20s, steps outside from within. His phone vibrates as he exits. He answers quickly with his right hand (important for later). Other party attendees are outside, all dressed nice.

JARED

(to phone)

Hey man, you caught me while I was leaving. (beat) Tired, you know. (beat) I'm not going to give you the play by play, you should have just come, we were in the same graduating class (beat) No, she got fat. (beat) Yeah, her too.

CUT TO.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - NIGHT

LIZ, late 20s scatterbrain, is driving carelessly while applying makeup. Music is blasting. Other people's car horns - also blasting. Chaos inside the car, expert driving skills outside the car. She hums along with the music.

CUT TO.

EXT. CATERING HALL - NIGHT

Jared remains on the phone, nodding. A woman in the background waits by a car. This gives him something to watch while answering droning questions.

JARED

(to phone)

Yep, fat. (beat) Also fat. (beat) No, she actually still looks good. (beat) Fat. (beat) Liz? Nah, Liz didn't show up. (beat) It's fine, she's probably too busy for something like this...

He turns his head away from the woman to see what appears to be a stunt driver - but it's just Liz. She parks in what may or may not be a legit spot, but it's close to the building.

JARED

You know what Aaron? I gotta go, I'll talk to you later.

(CONTINUED)

Jared abruptly ends the call. Liz exits her vehicle as cans and papers fall from within. She curses as she bends down to pick it up - throwing it all back into the car. Jared looks away toward the other woman, then the opposite way toward the party, then back at Liz. He approaches Liz. Liz finally gets her car door shut. She hurries around her car before seeing Jared.

JARED

Liz?

Liz freezes as she looks, then gasps!

LIZ

Aah! Jared!

She gives him the traditional hug. Smiles and laughs throughout their conversation.

JARED

Hey, its been a long time.

LIZ

Yeah, I guess it has.

JARED

You look great. I suppose its been about two or three years now.

LIZ

That's not too bad. I haven't seen a lot of the people in there in over ten years. I'm not late, am I?

JARED

Not terribly late, no. But look, I don't want to keep you, I was just saying hi as I was heading out.

LIZ

You're leaving?

JARED

Yeah, early start tomorrow. But you have fun in there. Open bar!

LIZ

Screw those people, talk to me.

JARED

I'd like that, but I really should be leaving. And I was just being nice earlier - You're really, really late.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
No I'm not! What time is it?

She checks her phone.

LIZ
Oh, yeah... yeah, I'm late. So... I
don't want another two or three
years to go by before I see you
again.

JARED
It doesn't have to. You still have
the same number?

LIZ
Yep.

JARED
Ok, I'll call you. We'll catch up.

LIZ
Ok, you better call. It'll be fun!

JARED
I will call you, I promise.

LIZ
Okay, then, you can go.

Another traditional hug.

LIZ
Bye, drive safe.

LIZ walks toward the building. Jared walks out into the
parking lot.

FADE TO BLACK, END SCENE.

SHOW TITLE: FRIEND ZONE.

INT. AARON'S HOME

From black, we have light as AARON, late 20s goofball, opens
his refrigerator and pulls out two cold beers. He shuts the
door as it goes back to black again. Image returns as the
beers hiss while the tops are pried off. They're placed in
coozies and carried over to Jared.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Was Misty really, really fat?

Aaron hands Jared a beer, then sits nearby.

JARED

Yeah, she really was.

AARON

Good. I hated that bitch.

JARED

I think it was in my junior year - I sat down in the cafeteria next to Liz, which wasn't my "usual spot" persay, and Misty was like two spots down. She looks at me with that ugly hippo face and said, (imitate) "Why are you sitting here?" Most of my class was cool, but there were just a handful of assholes who still wanted to have a class hierarchy, where band nerds can't talk to the cheerleaders, and the football players can't hang with the goth kids.

AARON

Yeah, and after she said that to you, you came back to your normal table, defeated.

JARED

Man, I didn't have time for that shit.

AARON

Nah, you came back cause I'm a better friend than Liz.

JARED

Oh yeah, did I tell you that I saw her?

AARON

No, you hung up on me too fast.

JARED

Yeah, that's cause I saw her. We talked for a few minutes.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Did she ask you to come "sit at her table"?

JARED

I think I see where you're trying to go with that code, so I'll play along and say, No. We've always been just friends.

AARON

Since you met, I think the two of you were the only ones that believed that.

JARED

Well, that's the way it was. Hell, I've known her since seventh grade.

AARON

So why didn't you date her in seventh grade?

JARED

Cause - I was in seventh grade.

AARON

Dude, I dated a bunch of girls as early as fourth - no, THIRD grade.

JARED

What's the point? It was lame to date anyone prior to having a car.

AARON

And that's why you got stuck in the friend zone.

JARED

Liz even tried to hook me up with her friend once.

AARON

You should have done it.

JARED

But it was an awkward phone call. She calls me up, and says to call her friend right now and ask her friend out.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
Was her friend ugly?

JARED
No, it was Holly.

AARON
Oh, Holly. She wasn't ugly.

JARED
But the whole thing was just weird.
I never felt a vibe from Holly...

AARON
Maybe Liz was testing you... seeing
if you'd take the bait.

JARED
Well, I didn't.

AARON
So what did you talk about when you
saw her last night?

JARED
She asked me to call her soon.

AARON
(funny)
To hookup?

JARED
No, go get a meal or something,
talk about old times. Totally
innocent.

AARON
Didn't you do that like two or
three years ago?

JARED
Yeah, we did. Like I said though,
we're just friends. She was engaged
to that Paul guy. We all hung out
and watched reality shows. I was
the third wheel with a DVR.

AARON
Update on Paul?

JARED
Didn't mention him.

Conversation slows down.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
Well.

JARED
Yeah.

AARON
You know, things are different now.

JARED
Yeah, I know.

Jared takes another drink.

EXT. EATERY - NIGHT

Liz and Jared are sitting amongst outdoor seating.

JARED
You remember Aaron, right?

LIZ
Yeah, Aaron Holmes?

JARED
Yeah.

LIZ
He wasn't at the reunion. You still see him?

JARED
Yeah, that's why I brought him up.
He couldn't make the reunion
because of a work thing, so he's
having a party and inviting the
class to his house.

LIZ
Cool!

JARED
Well, most of the class.

LIZ
I'm not invited?

JARED
No, you are. He didn't want Misty
there, and a few others.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Oh, I doubt she would show anyway.

JARED

She might. He doesn't have any staircases or anything.

LIZ

Aww, that's mean.

JARED

And all the free food.

Jared begins to imitate large bites, sucking in a table of food. Liz laughs as she feels pleasantly guilty

JARED

Can you go? It's this Friday.

LIZ

Friday? I don't know. I just saw everyone... don't really want to do that again. But if you want to do something else...

JARED

Okay, I just don't want another two or three years to go by, you know?

LIZ

Yeah, I know, it won't!

JARED

So what happened to Paul?

LIZ

Oh yeah, Paul.

JARED

You didn't get married, did you?

LIZ

No. He went to Japan to study language - then he decided he didn't want to come back.

JARED

What an asshole.

LIZ

He eventually did come back, though.

(CONTINUED)

JARED
Did you talk to him?

LIZ
No. I ignored his calls and kept
the ring.

They share a laugh that rings throughout the night.

INT. JARED'S LIVING ROOM AND LIZ'S BEDROOM (PHONE CALL) - N

Jared has fallen asleep in front of the TV. His phone rings. Its Liz. He answers. Liz's scenes: She's in bed, at her own place.

JARED
Hey Liz.

LIZ
I thought I was tired, but then I
got home and now I can't sleep.

Jared rubs his eyes and shakes himself awake.

JARED
Yeah, me neither.

LIZ
Remember when we used to talk on
the phone for hours? Sometimes like
three or four hours.

JARED
I remember one time it was six
hours, like we were going for some
record or something.

LIZ
And we'd mention it through out the
conversation. 2 hours! 3 hours!

JARED
Man, I never talk on the phone for
more than 2 or 3 minutes now. Take
call, message received, end call.

LIZ
Yeah, same here.

CAPTION: TWO HOURS LATER. Jared is outside in a reclining gravity lawn chair. Liz is sitting up in her own bed. They are still talking non-stop.

(CONTINUED)

JARED

So I remember one conversation
where you asked me to call up your
friend Holly...

LIZ

Yeah...

JARED

This was in seventh or eighth
grade. You wanted me to ask her
out.

LIZ

Uh-huh...

JARED

Why did you want me to do that?

LIZ

You know what?

JARED

What?

LIZ

I don't remember that at all.

JARED

You don't?

LIZ

Not in the slightest.

JARED

Come on! I remember where I was in
my house when you asked me that! I
was in my living room, next to my
piano. Some reason, I was standing.
And you don't remember it?

LIZ

No, I don't! I guess it wasn't that
important to me. Did you have a
thing for Holly?

JARED

No, that's why it was so weird! I
didn't even know her that well. I
think this was before she started
dating my friend Trey.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
That was in seventh grade.

JARED
You remember that, but no memory
whatsoever about asking me to do
that?

LIZ
Sorry Charlie, no dice.

JARED
Damn. (beat)

LIZ
Two hours.

JARED
Til what?

LIZ
We've been talking for two hours.

JARED
Oh, you're counting?

LIZ
Yeah, I'm going for a new record.

JARED
We have jobs now, I don't think we
can do it.

LIZ
Oh, I can do it, just you watch!

A shared laugh takes us away again.

END SCENE.

CUT TO.

INT. BREAK ROOM OR BISTRO.

Show a coffee cup from above. Cream is added, settles
shortly, then stir the cup. Jared and Aaron sit at a table.

AARON
You don't drink coffee.

(CONTINUED)

JARED

I do today. I was on the phone all night.

AARON

Be careful, dude.

JARED

It was just Liz, it's cool.

AARON

Just saying, you're getting into it a lot more than I thought you would.

JARED

I'm not getting into anything. Just friends, like we always were.

AARON

All night phone conversations isn't really a friend thing.

JARED

I'd talk to you all night if you asked.

AARON

You know what I mean.

JARED

You're right, I probably wouldn't.

AARON

Just be internet friends, isn't that good enough these days?

JARED

Hanging out and talking on the phone is all the stuff we used to do, and we were always just friends.

AARON

You're not in junior high anymore. Besides, when you were on the phone all that time, did you even talk?

JARED

What else would we be doing?

(CONTINUED)

AARON

I remember a long time ago when I was at your house, you and Liz were on the phone and there was just - Dead. Silence.

JARED

That's probably cause you were in the room.

AARON

Dead. Silence. For the whole time I was in there.

JARED

No, we talk. We have a lot more to talk about these days.

AARON

You're right about that. Any words at all is an improvement.

JARED yawns.

AARON

Come by early on Friday.

JARED

Why?

AARON

I need your truck to pick up the keg.

JARED

A keg? Now who's in junior high?

AARON

You ordered kegs in junior high?

JARED

You know... you were there.

AARON

Yeah, right.

END SCENE.

INT. AARON'S HOME

The house is alive with activity. Red solo cups all over the place. Jared steps outside, calls Liz.

INT. LIZ'S LIVING ROOM.

She answers. To and from shots.

LIZ

Jared!

Jared isn't drunk, but has had a few.

JARED

Hey Liz. Are you sure you can't make it?

LIZ

Yeah, I really don't want to. I just cooked a big meal and all...

Show a shot of a nearly completed TV dinner.

JARED

Come on, I really thought you would be here. (beat) I don't want another two or three years to go by...

LIZ

Okay, okay, where am I going?

Liz gets up from the couch.

INT. AARON'S HOME

In a back bedroom, Liz and Jared sit on the bed watching TV. They are each laying down on their sides, fairly separate. There are other people in the room, but not many. One person is sitting behind Jared, talking to someone standing up nearby. Door is open, it's totally innocent.

JARED

Hey, I just noticed you're late to another party.

LIZ

Well, I wasn't even going to come! Its ruining my average.

(CONTINUED)

JARED
Keeping count?

LIZ
Yes, I was doing quite well!

A couple sits down behind Liz, forcing her to scoot forward next to Jared. It seems uncomfortable.

JARED
You want to get up?

It suddenly gets comfortable.

LIZ
No, I'm good.

Aaron pops his head into the room. He spots Jared and Liz. Jared and Aaron trade looks. Aaron is disappointed, and leaves the room. Liz doesn't spot any of this as she watches TV. Liz lays her head on Jared. The couple that just sat down turn their attention toward Jared and Liz.

GIRL
(drunk-ish)
Oh, sorry I made you move, he pushed me down!

LIZ
It's okay.

GIRL
Are you two a couple?

Jared and Liz look at each other, waiting for the other to answer. Even though this GIRL is drunk, even she can see how awkward this has become. JARED breaks first.

JARED
No, no, just friends.

LIZ
Yeah.

GIRL
Oh, ok, sorry. You guys just look like a couple. Like you were in junior high.

Jared and Liz focus back on each other.

LIZ

Okay, is my memory really that bad?
Cause I don't remember that.

JARED

Your memory is fine. Aaron said
everyone thought we were a couple.

LIZ

Oh... But we weren't, right?

JARED

No. But would that had been so bad?

LIZ

No, that would have been great. I
mean, fine.

No hiding it now.

LIZ

So why we didn't try?

JARED

I didn't date anyone prior to
junior year. I didn't like the idea
of dating so young. It probably
wouldn't have lasted.

LIZ

You think?

JARED

I don't know.

LIZ

Probably. (beat) Who knows.

JARED

Yeah. (beat) Since we're talking
about this, I should tell you...

Jared and Liz slowly connect hands while Jared speaks.
Almost unconsciously.

JARED

It used to tear me up when I would
think about the things I wanted to
say to you, but I couldn't say it
at the time. I know it sounds silly
now, but something about being
young and inexperienced created a
mental block or something, that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JARED (cont'd)
kept me from saying what I wanted
to say. That's probably why I never
wanted to date - cause I just
couldn't. But knowing how I feel
about you now... how I've never
really stopped... feeling this way
about you... I know, for sure, it
would have lasted.

Jared and Liz are on the brink of a kiss, when suddenly the
drunk couple next to them push onto the bed, and Liz's face
goes down into Jared's chest. She recovers and they both
give an ugly look toward the drunk couple.

LIZ
Let's go outside.

JARED
Good idea.

They rush to get up.

EXT. AARON'S HOME - NIGHT

Un-cut shot idea. Jared is preparing a drink. Aaron
approaches from behind.

AARON
Missing something?

Aaron grabs Jared by his left forearm and turns him around.

JARED
Take it easy.

AARON
What I saw in there wasn't just
friends.

JARED
What are you talking about?

AARON
In the back bedroom.

JARED
We got pushed together because of a
drunk couple falling on the bed. We
got up right after that.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Not right after, dude, or else I
wouldn't have seen anything.

JARED

Chill out man, enjoy your party.

AARON

Fuck the party. I'm worried about
my friend. I need to fix him and
his fucked up head. You say the two
of you talked for hours - what do
you talk about?

JARED

Everything.

AARON

Everything, or nothing?

Jared turns back around to make a drink. Aaron leaves as
Jared continues.

JARED

You know, school stuff, life stuff
- mostly about her. (Rambles on as
long as needed)

Aaron returns after about 15 seconds and puts a hand on
Jared's shoulder.

AARON

I filled in the details, for your
own good.

JARED freezes in place while making a drink. Aaron keeps on
walking, out of scene. Liz enters.

LIZ

(calmly)

You got married?

JARED

Yeah.

LIZ

No ring?

JARED

Not right now.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

You could have told me, Jared.
We're just friends.

JARED

I know.

LIZ

I mean, that's a pretty big detail to leave out. Don't get me wrong though, we we're never going to be anything more than friends, but a detail like that is something you tell your friends, don't you?

JARED

You're right. I'm sorry.

Liz was calm, but now its starting to come undone.

LIZ

It's fine Jared. I mean, you could have mentioned it during when I saw you outside the reunion, or when we went out to eat... or maybe during that two hour phone conversation. Or maybe the best time to say it would have been about 20 minutes ago, when you told me you have always had feelings for me!

Liz has cresendood up to a harsh yell. Bring it back down to a serious talk level.

LIZ

Jared, I've always felt the same way. I thought tonight we were finally on the same page after fifteen years. But, once again, we're just victims of bad timing. 15 years of it. (beat) And when you finally had the guts to tell me how you felt about me, I invested everything. I dumped every emotion I had in a matter of seconds to someone I thought I could trust. Someone I've known for fifteen years. (beat) What did you think would happen?

Jared is speechless. Liz slaps him with a resounding POP.

CUT TO.

EXT. CATERING HALL - NIGHT

Liz exits her vehicle as cans and papers fall from within. She curses as she bends down to pick it up. Jared looks away, toward the other woman, then the opposite way, then back at Liz. For a second longer than before, still looks at Liz. He turns toward the woman getting into her car and walks toward her.

JARED

Hey honey, all set?

WOMAN

Yeah, did you have a good time?

JARED

Yeah, it was okay. Glad its over.

Jared gets into the vehicle and starts it over conversation about the reunion.

Liz walks up to the building where Jared was standing, then looks over to his direction. She spots Jared driving away. She smiles as she recognizes him. She gives a look as to say, what if?

END SCENE.

CUT TO BLACK. SHOW TITLE.